

alternative minimum tax, the dreaded AMT; and as I get to in a second, leave before we raise the minimum wage.

We should be working for the American people in October instead of spending the month going home to ask for their forgiveness for not working in October.

Let us look particularly at the minimum wage. We should be dealing with H.R. 2129 which would increase the minimum wage from its incredibly low \$5.15 to something approaching a minimum wage.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to bring up H.R. 2129.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the guidelines consistently issued by successive Speakers, as recorded on page 734 of the House Rules Manual, the Chair is constrained not to entertain the gentleman's request until it has been cleared by the bipartisan floor and committee leaderships.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may inquire.

Mr. SHERMAN. What you are citing there is the mere custom of this House and not an official rule of this House; is that correct?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. It is part of the Speaker's guidelines for the exercise of discretion in recognition.

Mr. SHERMAN. And, in fact, for the first 150 years of this House, we had no such guidelines.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the settled guidelines previously cited, the request cannot be entertained.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, point of parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may inquire.

Mr. SHERMAN. You say that we cannot bring up this needed raise in the minimum wage?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is saying that he cannot entertain the instant unanimous-consent request to that end.

Mr. SHERMAN. You cannot even entertain the request because it has not been cleared by the leadership of both parties; is what you are saying?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. At both committee and floor levels, that is correct.

Mr. SHERMAN. Well, it has been cleared by the Democratic Party. So it is really just the Republican Party that says we cannot raise the minimum wage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not stating a parliamentary inquiry.

IMPLEMENT THE 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

(Mr. RYAN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the single most important thing this ad-

ministration and this Republican Congress can do to keep us safe is immediately implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations, but this President and this Congress have failed to do so.

So what do we get instead? We get a bloody and costly war. We get incompetent leadership. We get Republican leadership in the House, the Senate and the White House that gets 5 Fs and 12 Ds from the 9/11 Commission. We get a Secretary of Defense that says that the next person that brings me a postwar plan, or asks us to do so, is going to get fired, and then no one in the administration gets fired for all the bumbling that goes on with this war. Not only do some of them not get fired, the Assistant Secretary of Defense actually got a promotion to the World Bank.

What else do we get? We get a report from a nonpartisan Intelligence Committee that said this war has made us less safe. We get \$8 billion a month getting sent to a black hole. We are borrowing more money from foreign interests than we ever had. This President has borrowed more money from foreign interests than every President before him.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is this. This President, this Congress and his policies have made us less safe, not more safe.

REPUBLICAN INDIFFERENCE

(Mr. LARSON of Connecticut asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleagues for coming to the floor this morning, and certainly those of us listening today and throughout this country can understand that our frustration here is only superseded by the frustration of millions of Americans.

I am proud of the leadership on the Democratic side that is insisting that we take up these matters discussed here on this floor today, tomorrow, or Friday before we adjourn. They are that pressing.

The gentleman from Georgia came down and criticized this as being petty and not having respect. What about respect for the families of 9/11? What about the respect for people who need a minimum wage increase? For the middle class squeeze that is going on with energy and college tuition, what about respect for them?

Roosevelt said it best of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, "We do not question your patriotism or love of country." What he said, though, rings true, that "you are frozen in the ice of your own indifference," your indifference towards working families, your indifference to the families of the 9/11 Commission report who seek a resolution here.

Please join us in bringing this forward.

CONGRESS SHOULD SHOW THAT IT IS COMMITTED TO SECURING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TODAY

(Mr. WU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, the chairman of the independent, bipartisan 9/11 Commission said the Federal Government is not fulfilling its job of protecting the American people. The 9/11 Commission went on to say that the war in Iraq is a distraction, draining resources from critical American security needs.

Like the 9/11 Commissioners, I am concerned that the war in Iraq is preventing us from dealing with the real threat, a terrorist attack in America. Over the last 3 years, the war in Iraq has cost the American taxpayers more than \$320 billion, and yet, as the unanimous National Intelligence Estimate shows, we are less safe today because of the continuing war in Iraq. At the end of this year, the war in Iraq will have gone on longer than World War II.

Despite this distraction from the real struggle against terrorism, as the National Intelligence Estimate said, this Congress should show that it is committed to securing the American people today. We cannot afford to wait until after the November election.

NO RECESS UNTIL ACTION IS TAKEN ON ENERGY PRICES

(Ms. SLAUGHTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, this do-less-than-nothing Congress just returned from another recess, and already the Republicans are preparing to adjourn at the end of this week so they can go home and campaign. This is not what people sent us here to do. They expect us to address issues of importance and to do our best to improve their quality of life.

Yet, Republicans in this body seem content to head back home, having had "dead-horse week" and bills yesterday that will never see the light of day in the Senate; and they are expecting us at home to do this to improve their quality of life.

Democrats are committed to finding solutions, not ones that involve destroying our natural resources for short-term gains or ones that rely on Middle Eastern potentates to ensure our way of life, and certainly not the so-called solutions that provide tax breaks to oil companies and not to consumers.

Instead, we are committed to cracking down on price gouging, repealing the \$8 billion in tax breaks to oil companies, and investing in new energy technologies to really end our dependence on foreign oil.

Mr. Speaker, we do not have time to do nothing about the energy crisis. I ask unanimous consent to bring up